



SUPPLEMENT

TO

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THURSDAY, 27 DECEMBER, 1917.

War Office,
27th December, 1917.

The Secretary of State for War has received the following Despatch from Lieutenant-General A. R. Hoskins, C.M.G., D.S.O., on the operations in East Africa from 20th January to 30th May, 1917:—

General Headquarters,
East Africa.
30th May, 1917.

Sir,—

I have the honour to forward the following despatch describing the operations and work of the forces under my command from the 20th January, 1917, the date upon which I assumed command in East Africa, to the 30th May, 1917, the date upon which I handed over that command.

General Situation.

1. On the 20th January the situation was as follows:—

The operations between the Mgeta River and the Rufiji, the crossing of the latter by the 1st

East African Brigade at Kibambawe and by General Beves at Mkalinsu, and the subsequent advance of the Nigerian Brigade towards Mkindu, had resulted in a weakening of the strong opposition hitherto offered by the enemy in the Kibata area. Profiting by this, the 1st Division, under General Hannington, composed of the 2nd and 3rd East African Brigades, had occupied Mohoro, in the Rufiji delta, and Ngarambi, south of the Kitshi hills, and was pressing westward and northward.

Of the German forces in the eastern area the greater portion under their Commander-in-Chief was still in the neighbourhood of Utete or east of the Lugonya River. Six or seven hundred rifles 30 miles north of Utete were contesting the advance of Colonel Burne's Column from Kisegesse through Koge towards the Rufiji. The southern bank of that river was held by the enemy from Utete to Nyakisiki, while a force was in position four miles south of Mkindu, engaged with the Nigerian Brigade and Cape Corps.

In the western area General Northey had driven the enemy east of the Ruhudje River. Six or seven companies, under Kraut, were in

the neighbourhood of Ifinga; seven more, under Wahle and Wintgens near Kitanda, and two, under Grawert, at Likuju. All these were in contact with General Northey's forces.

At Mahenge and holding the line of the Kilombero River to west and north of that place were considerable detachments; that on the north near Ifakara's being faced by the troops of the Iringa Column occupying the mountainous country east and south-east of Iringa.

In the Lindi area and westwards some seven hundred men were in widely separated detachments at Tunduru, Newala, in the valley of the Mbemkuru, and near Lindi itself; while a garrison of five hundred was reported near Liwale.

The approximate total strength of the efficient troops of the enemy in the field was computed at 1,100 whites and 7,300 Askaris, with four guns of 4in. or 4.1in. calibre, sixteen smaller ones and seventy-three machine guns.

It was clearly necessary to push the enemy off the Rufiji River and as far south as possible so as to be able to use the Rufiji River for transport purposes; and the operations of the Kilwa and Rufiji Columns had been conceived with this object. From native reports and such statistics as were available three more weeks of fine weather could be expected. But the supply and transport situation was not at all satisfactory. There was no reserve in the advanced depôts; the number of porters was insufficient; the animals in transport units were dying and the drivers of the mechanical transport were falling sick so rapidly that the numbers of troops in the front line could not be maintained there.

I therefore withdrew to the central railway the bulk of the 1st Brigade, and as much of the Force Reserve as could be spared, intending to push forward as far as possible with the remainder.

A force was sent from the 1st East African Brigade towards Nyakisiki, which was occupied by us after some fighting. This enabled the enemy to disembarrass himself of his hospital there, containing 50 Germans and 150 Askaris.

The 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division pushed on towards Utete, and the 3rd Brigade cleared the country immediately north of Ngarambi. General Cunliffe's Nigerian Brigade drove an enemy force of three companies from Kibongo, four miles south of Mkindu, and occupied their position. Colonel Burne's Column worked steadily southwards towards the Rufiji; and the Navy commenced a survey of the channels of the Rufiji delta.

On the 24th January General Cunliffe sent a battalion of Nigerians to oust the Germans from Nyandote, 15 miles south of Mkindu. They were unable to dislodge the enemy, who was found in considerably greater strength than had been anticipated; and after a gallant fight the battalion withdrew to Kibongo. On the same day Grawert, with 40 Germans, 200 Askaris, a field gun and 2 machine guns, surrendered at Likuju to a detachment of General Northey's force. The supply arrangements of this enemy force seem to have entirely failed.

Utete was occupied by the 2nd East African Brigade on the 21st January, and by the beginning of February the north bank of the Rufiji was practically clear of the enemy.

Commencement of Rainy Season.

2. All seemed to be going well when on January 25th heavy rain began to fall, ushering in the wettest season known in East Africa for many years. By the 27th the lines of communication from Mikessee to Kibambawe were interrupted by the washing away of bridges and the flooding of roads; and operations in all areas were henceforward seriously hampered by the untimely rain.

It is perhaps hard to realise the difficulties which the rainy season in East Africa entailed for a force acting from such widely separated bases, with several different lines of communication running through every variety of difficult country and necessitating in some cases as much as 130 miles of porter transport. In the Mgeta and Rufiji valleys roads constructed with much skill and labour, over which motor transport ran continuously in January, were traversed with difficulty and much hardship a month later by porters wading for miles in water above their waists. The Dodoma-Iringa line of communication crossed the Great Ruaha in the dry weather by an easy ford; when the rain had really set in, supplies had to be transported not only over a flooded river but also a swamp on each side of it 6 feet deep and as many miles wide. Considerable anxiety was caused by this extensive flooding across the Dodoma-Iringa communication, and every effort was made to cope with this. The Iringa Column was kept as small as possible, and special flat-bottomed boats were prepared, but eventually it became necessary to switch on to a new line along the road which runs south from the railway at Kilossa. The valley of the Rufiji and its various tributaries became a vast lake, in which the true courses of the streams were often only discernible with difficulty, if at all. Patrol work had to be carried out for some time in canoes, and the men found themselves making fast to the roofs of houses which had lately formed their quarters.

The conditions of the Kilwa area were equally trying, as roads became impassable for motor transport and animals died a few weeks after being landed. An even more serious factor perhaps was the sickness amongst the troops. The coastal belt and the valleys of the Mgeta and Rufiji even in dry weather are unhealthy for all but the indigenous African; and during the rains there is a great increase in malaria, while dysentery and pneumonia strike down even the African native.

In 1916 many of our troops in East Africa spent the rainy season in high and comparatively healthy localities. It was impossible to do this in 1917 without withdrawing from ground which had been hardly won and out of which the enemy would have to be driven again with equal difficulty should he be allowed to re-occupy it.

That the enemy had also to contend with sickness, and with sameness, if not with scarcity, of food, is certain; but in a minor degree, since his white men were more acclimatized to German East Africa, and his native soldiers indigenous to the country. He had the advantage of falling back on interior lines; of veteran troops from whose ranks nearly all waverers had by this time been eliminated; and of his power of living on the country as he retired. This last was accentuated by the fact that whereas we are accustomed to take and pay for only what the villagers can spare, the

Germans have no scruples about taking all. And after using men, women and children as porters so far as they require, they send them back in a starving condition, thus increasing the difficulties of our advancing troops.

Operations During Commencement of Rains.

3. Before giving an account of the reorganisation which took place during the rains for the assumption of offensive operations with the advent of the dry season I will briefly describe the operations which took place before the rains had reached their full height.

General Northey's Operations in the West.

In the south-western theatre of operations, where the rains had not been so heavy, a considerable amount of activity took place. At the beginning of February General Northey's forces were distributed thus:—

- (a) A small column at Likuju.
- (b) Colonel Byron's force at and about Songea.
- (c) Colonel Tomlinson's force at Kitanda opposing Wintgens.
- (d) Colonel Murray's column, having driven Kraut eastward from Ifinga, was between that place and the Pitu River.
- (e) A column under Colonel Hawthorn was near Alt-Langenburg, on its way to Wiedhafen.
- (f) An African battalion east of Lupembe, watching the Ruhudje River.

After the surrender of Grawert, the Likuju Column moved northwards towards Kitanda; and Wintgens thereupon retired, fighting rearguard actions, to Gumbiro, where he was joined by Kraut. Little food was obtainable in the Gumbiro district, so they were unable to stay there long, and on February 8th news was received that Kraut was moving southwards. On the 10th he appeared on the Wiedhafen-Songea road, attacked two of our posts without success, and moved south on the 11th, hotly pursued by Colonel Hawthorn, whose column had been moved most opportunely. Kraut's men were reported to be in a discontented state, probably from lack of supplies; his retirement was therefore rapid, and though his rearguards were frequently roughly handled by our pursuing column, he managed to make good his retreat with six companies and three guns to the Portuguese border due south of Songea. Reports of the assembly of a considerable enemy force at Likuju were received about the 24th February, and Colonel Hawthorn was therefore recalled to Songea. Wintgens meanwhile had moved westwards, and his advanced troops began to appear at the Milow Mission about the middle of the month.

General Northey, thinking it possible that Wintgens was meditating an attack on his lines of communication between Alt-Langenburg and Ubena, ordered the bulk of Colonel Murray's Column to move from the Ruhdje to Tandala. A small mobile column, under Captain Anderson, 18th Hussars, sent out from Tandala to reconnoitre Milow, was attacked twelve miles north of the latter place on February 16th by greatly superior numbers, and, after a most gallant fight, had to retire under cover of darkness. Colonel Fairweather, supporting him with some of the South African

Motor Cyclist Corps, was killed. A company of King's African Rifles, moving out from Tandala on February 18th, was nearly surrounded by the main body of Wintgens' force six miles from that place, but bravely cut its way out after heavy fighting, and retired on Tandala, which Wintgens proceeded to invest from west and south. On the 22nd, however, Colonel Murray's Column arrived, and Wintgens, not waiting to be attacked, moved northwards, abandoning a 1.4-in. gun. Wintgens' force consisted of about 600 men, of whom one-tenth were whites—and he was reported to have twelve Maxims and two guns. Colonel Murray followed him at once; and thus, on February 25th, began a long chase, which was destined to continue for several months, and to which Colonel Murray applied characteristic energy and determination.

General Northey's forces had necessarily been so much scattered to deal with the numerous enemy detachments along his front, that it only required the dash displayed by Wintgens to break through. The remainder of the forces at my disposal had dwindled by this time to such a low ebb, that it was some time before I was able to get together even a small column to join in the operations against Wintgens.

The Lindi Area.

The enemy had shown signs of concentrating their scattered forces in the vicinity of Lindi itself, and I considered it wise to strengthen the weak garrison. Brigadier-General O'Grady, with an adequate force, was placed in command, and active steps were taken to keep the enemy at arm's length. The organisation of the port was taken in hand forthwith, as I desired to operate strongly from this direction at the end of the rains.

Operations about Rufiji and Kilwa.

During February there was little change in the Rufiji area. The enemy, probably on account of the rise of the river, which had begun to top its banks and to flood the surrounding country, withdrew a few companies south-east, but he still showed a strong front on the right bank of the river, about Utenge, and in front of the Nigerian Brigade at Mkindu. An attack on our outposts at Nyakisiki was beaten off with loss. General Hannington pushed troops of the 1st Division 10 miles north of Ngarambi; but difficulties of supply and lack of suitable transport prevented any decided offensive movement. By the end of February the 1st Division was on the line Utete-Namatowa-Chemera; the latter place and Mitole covering the tramline in course of construction westward from Kilwa towards Liwale.

By this time the north bank of the Rufiji was clear, and the larger half of Colonel Burne's Column was ferried over the river near Utete. The survey of the river by the Navy amongst the mangrove swamps of the Rufiji Delta proved a most arduous task, but Lieut.-Commander Garbett produced an accurate survey in a remarkably short time, and although subsequent floods altered the channels and shifted the bars, the flow of supplies by water to Utete was regular thenceforward.

There was much patrol activity during March in the Utenge Lake area and on the banks of the Lugonya and Kingani Rivers, but the flooded state of the country prevented operations of any greater magnitude. To-

wards the middle of March the enemy began to show increased activity south of the Matandu River, and Mpotora was reported to be strongly held. It was evident that part of the Utenge force had moved southwards, so the forces in the Kilwa area were redistributed accordingly.

Reorganisation.

4. Meanwhile the feeding of the various columns was a source of much anxiety to me and to all my column commanders.

As the rains increased in the Kilwa area the animals died of fly, and light mechanical transport work became impossible; porter transport had gradually to be adopted inland, and a system of dhows and boats up to river-head on the Matandu River was instituted. Portions of the first Division located at Mohoro and subsequently at Utete were supplied by river transport up the Rufiji under arrangements with the Navy, and the river became the main line of supplies for all troops in that area.

The maintenance of the troops in the Iringa area by the Dodoma-Iringa line had become so precarious that in March the Kilossa-Iringa line had to be adopted, though it involved heavy casualties among porters and donkeys and much sickness among the white personnel. It was not until May that weather conditions again permitted of the Dodoma-Iringa line being used.

Difficulties of supply through the low-lying country between Kibambawe and the Uluguru uplands steadily increased, so that the troops were frequently on half rations. I therefore hastened the withdrawal of the remainder of General Beves' force to Morogoro to recuperate and refit.

Sickness amongst Europeans and South African units had assumed such proportions as to necessitate their withdrawal to recuperate. I decided to send as many as possible to South Africa and to recall them in time for offensive operations after the rains.

The hardships of the campaign and the brunt of the fighting since 1914 had been borne by some Indian units and by the King's African Rifles. These had also suffered severely from sickness, especially the Indians; but units were so weak as to make it impossible to withdraw any of the King's African Rifles, and only certain of the Indians were able to be sent to healthier ground to recuperate.

Formation of Columns.

Before I assumed command the 3rd Division was in process of leaving the country for South Africa, and the decision had been taken to return the 2nd Division there also. This left the force under my command too weak as it stood to assume offensive operations at the end of the rainy season. Steps were therefore taken largely to increase the King's African Rifles, to reinforce the troops from West Africa, to bring the Indian battalions up to strength by drafts, and, if possible, to make some exchanges for new units.

With the withdrawal of these Divisions from the force the old Divisional organisation became unsuitable. Taking into consideration the probable nature of future operations, I decided early in February to rearrange the Staffs and to reorganise the forces so as to form columns of sizes suitable for the forthcoming operations; so that during May, by which time it was hoped that the ground might be drying

up, concerted forward movements might be made from Lindi, Kilwa, Central Rufiji, Iringa, Songea respectively, and possibly from further south.

Transport.

It had become clear that in this country animal transport was no longer to be relied upon; porters and light mechanical transport were essential. At this time both of these were insufficient in numbers and personnel, and required complete reorganisation. This was a most urgent matter, and was taken in hand at once.

Carrier Corps.

The collection, transportation, organisation and proper distribution of native porters was a problem of great difficulty. It was essential that the white personnel who were to handle these porters should understand the natives and be able to speak to them in their own language. I therefore appealed to the Governments of British East Africa and Uganda and sent to them a senior Staff Officer to explain the situation and its requirements. I received most ready help. In March the Compulsory Service Act was put into force; and to organise and supervise the collection and transportation of natives a senior and most experienced Civil Official, Mr. (subsequently Colonel) John Ainsworth, was placed at my disposal. It was decided that the increased number of porters which was required be drawn mainly from the district bordering Lake Victoria, as containing the races best fitted to withstand the climatic conditions of German East Africa. Improved results were soon apparent; and though the transportation of porters by sea was restricted by the limited amount of shipping available, it was not long before marked improvements in the feeding of the troops began as a result of a steady increase in the supply of native carriers.

Mechanical Transport.

In addition to porters it was necessary to prepare for a large increase in light motor lorries to be in the country when the roads had dried up after the rains. These demands were met as far as possible from England, South Africa and India. As we had by now gained considerable experience of the rapidity with which motor drivers fell sick in this country, a large increase of these was arranged for. Schools of instruction for drivers were started in South Africa, East Africa and Uganda; while further demands were made on the United Kingdom and India for personnel.

Medical.

I have stated above that with the advent of the rains the general sick rate rapidly increased—mainly malaria and, to a lesser extent, dysentery. The stoppage of wheeled transport further added to the difficulties. The large numbers of porters required to replace other classes of transport greatly increased the sick list and the necessity of transporting sick by hand instead of by wheel, involved a much slower rate of evacuation. The change of troops from Europeans to mainly coloured races also necessitated a change of medical personnel. To meet these altered conditions special medical units were organised, and a demand for a large number of Medical Officers and personnel was made. Recruiting was com-

menced for an African Medical Corps in Uganda to provide personnel for carrier hospitals and trained dressers for the King's African Rifles. Increased equipment was adapted to porter loads and stretcher-bearers were provided.

We were also able to assist the Belgians with medical stores and equipment.

King's African Rifles.

As it had been recognised that it would be necessary to employ as many African native troops as possible when the campaign should have reached its present stage, a considerable increase in the King's African Rifles had been sanctioned nearly a year ago. The organisation and training of the new battalions was pushed on rapidly, and I took the earliest opportunity of inspecting those at Tabora and Nairobi. I was satisfied that the progress made was all that could have been expected. It is not generally understood that the African native takes a long time to train. Those of good fighting tribes are of little use before they have had fully a year's training with officers conversant with local conditions, and even then they must be used with care. Those recruited from inferior tribes take considerably longer, and all African natives require to be handled by white officers and N.C.O.'s who understand them and who can speak their language. I made a considerable demand on the War Office for white personnel for these battalions, but some time must elapse before good results can be looked for. It is necessary at the same time to guard against the King's African Rifles units in the field losing their efficiency from frequent calls upon them for trained personnel, both black and white.

Training.

The rainy season was taken advantage of for the further training of troops. Schools of instruction in machine and Lewis guns, in hand and rifle grenades, in trench mortars, and in signalling were organised and kept filled.

Air Service.

The Royal Flying Corps made useful flights whenever possible, but except in the west, where the weather was less severe, they were able to do little in the height of the rains. I therefore withdrew the greater part of them to refit and recuperate. New aerodromes were made at Songea and at Lindi.

Railways.

The reconstruction of the central railway continued rapidly in spite of the rains. Through traffic was opened between Dar-es-Salaam and Dodoma in January, and special regard was paid during that month to the improvement of the bridges on the Ruvo and Mkata rivers, which required considerable attention, repairs and reconstruction. In February the Dodoma-Tabora section was opened for traffic, thus connecting with the Belgian system through to Lake Tanganyika, and the systematic improvement of the line from Dar-es-Salaam to Tabora was continued.

As I was not certain that the amount of road transport available after the rains would be sufficient for the various lines of communication, I decided that the best use of the surplus railway material at my disposal would be to push a branch line south as far as possible from

Dodoma towards Iringa. Work commenced upon this in the middle of April, and provision was made for special ships to bring forward the necessary material, large quantities of which were landed and pushed up during that month.

The Kilwa tramline, on which the troops in that area must largely depend, was pushed forward as rapidly as possible, but the difficulties which arose through rains and sickness in this area made its progress disappointing. Much material, however, has been landed at Kilwa, and with the return of the dry weather the rate of construction will greatly improve.

Water Transport.

I have previously alluded to the survey of the Rufiji waterways and to the subsequent formation of the river transport service. No one who has not seen the Rufiji River in flood can in any way realise the difficulties with which this service had to contend. Hard work and perseverance eventually enabled all the troops in the Utete area to be maintained by water transport, and in May the first river transport boat from Utete reached Kibambawe.

Ordnance.

The raising of the new King's African Rifles Battalions and the great increase in the Carrier Corps and in pack animals threw a heavy strain upon the Ordnance Department, and until equipment could arrive from England local manufactures had to be resorted to in order to meet these demands.

Co-operation with the Belgians and Portuguese.

At the beginning of February I had proceeded to Palma to meet the Portuguese Governor and Commander-in-Chief, and had discussed with him the lines of co-operation which might become possible as soon as his forces should be organised. In May he returned my visit, and we were able to have a further discussion at Dar-es-Salaam.

In April, as soon as I was informed that our Government had arranged with the Belgian Government that their forces should again co-operate with us, I proceeded to Tanganyika, and there conferred with General Malfeyt, the Commissaire Royal, and with Colonel Huyghe, the Commander-in-Chief. The result of this conference was very satisfactory, and was cabled to the War Office at the time. The Belgian troops were assisted with supplies, porters and equipment, and their subsequent co-operation in May proved of the greatest assistance.

Operations during the Rains.

5. It will be realised from the foregoing that the period of the rains was essentially one of reorganisation. Nevertheless, whenever the local conditions in any way admitted of it every effort was made by column commanders to harass the enemy.

Lindi Area.

At Lindi, Brig.-Gen. O'Grady carried out several local offensive enterprises. His patrols did well, and got the upper hand; the hills south of the harbour were secured; and a well-executed surprise attack on a German post west of Nguru Mahamba on March 11th resulted in the dispersion of the garrison and the capture of a pompom. The enemy had mounted

a 4.1-in. gun in the neighbourhood of Mrveka, and with it they kept up an intermittent and comparatively harmless fire on our picquets on Kitulo Hill. On the 23rd April our troops surprised an enemy camp at Yangwani, the Germans retiring in confusion, and leaving many stores behind. On the 24th our small post at Sudi Bay was attacked by a couple of companies, who were driven off, leaving a dozen dead. On the 25th there was a smart engagement between the King's African Rifles and an equal number of the enemy. The result was satisfactory, and but for the lack of white personnel might have been a decided success. By the end of April several fresh companies were reported in the Lindi area, and a considerable number, including Kraut's command, were at or about Tunduru. The latter force had re-crossed the Portuguese border towards the end of March.

Nothing further of importance took place in this area until the 19th May, when a strong reconnaissance towards Mrveka met the enemy in considerable force just west of Ngurumahamba. The fight lasted all day, and established the fact that the enemy had not weakened his forces in this vicinity.

During this period the port of Lindi was being opened up and prepared as a base for future operations.

Reliable information was received that the Germans were building up large food depots in the neighbourhood of Massassi. This, coupled with the fact that they had virtually evacuated the line of the Matandu River, and were apparently not holding the Kilwa-Liwale road in any strength, seemed to point to their general line of retirement from the Kilwa area being via Likawage and the Mbemkuru River towards Massassi.

Operations about Rufiji and Kilwa.

The withdrawal of the enemy from the Uteenge Lake area went on steadily during April, and towards the middle of the month it became evident that considerable numbers were concentrating about 20 miles to the south-west of Kilwa Kivinje. Patrol affairs in this vicinity occurred daily, in one of which a detachment of the Gold Coast Regiment distinguished itself by ambushing an enemy force three times their strength, inflicting about 40 casualties.

On April 18th a force of 400 of the 40th Pathans, 200 of the King's African Rifles, and two Mountain Guns of the Gold Coast Regiment, under command of Major Tyndall, 40th Pathans, attacked a body of the enemy which had advanced to within a few miles of Rumbo. The enemy proved to be in strength and, after a sharp action of several hours, in which the losses on both sides were considerable, our force retired to Rumbo and entrenched. Though this attack failed in its immediate object, it had the effect of relieving the Kilwa force of any further pressure from this direction.

On April 20th the German hospital at Mpangania, 10 miles west of Utete, was given up to us, and measures were at once taken to evacuate the 70 European and 140 Askari patients, many of whom were convalescent. So isolated had the hospital become by the rise of the Rufiji, that the evacuation had to be carried out entirely by canoes, paddled or poled through the reeds, the current in the river itself being too fierce to face even in a powerful motor boat.

The sickness caused by the exceptional rains had by this time depleted our European personnel to a most serious extent. The shortage of British officers was severely felt in all fighting units in the coastal area; and it was with difficulty that the trolley-line, on which the troops south of the Matandu River depended for supplies, could be kept running. At Kibambawe the river gave cause for much anxiety, and on the 14th reached its highest point; at the ferry it was six feet above the highest flood level previously known to the local natives. Communication across the river became precarious and dangerous, and eleven men were drowned while crossing on the 19th. Owing to the increasing difficulty of supply on the central Rufiji, I was forced to reduce the Nigerian garrison still further. This could now, however, be safely done, as the Germans, after gradually decreasing their strength in this area, withdrew southwards from Ngwembe on the 22nd April.

On the 5th May a small gun suddenly opened fire from the mangrove swamps on the mainland west of Kilwa-Kisiwani on a ship lying at anchor in the harbour at that place. Concerted measures with the Navy were quickly taken, the enemy driven off, and a post established on the mainland. In the Kilwa area the enemy continued to withdraw from the north of the Matandu River, and to strengthen his forces on the Ngaura River 20 miles south-west of Kilwa-Kivinje. By the 20th May Mpatora had been completely evacuated by the Germans, the force there moving partly southwards towards Liwale and partly eastwards through Likawage.

Meanwhile, Loge-Loge, on the Rufiji, had been occupied by us on May 9th, and by the middle of the month the Rufiji, from Utete to Kibambawe and the country for 20 miles south of the river, was entirely clear of the enemy. By the end of May, partly from the pressure of our forces and partly on account of floods and exhaustion of food supplies, the enemy had given up practically the whole area north of the Matandu River, and had also retired for 50 miles eastward of Songea.

Heavy rain continued in the coastal area until the middle of May, and some time must elapse before the damage done to our lines of communication can be repaired, and the waterlogged country become fit for the movement of wheeled traffic.

General Northey's Operations in the West.

In March four companies under Langenn were at Mpepo, near the junction of the Ruhudje and Pitu Rivers; and as Northey had weakened his Lupembe front to strengthen Murray's Column, I sent a battalion of African troops from Iringa to Ubena. I was enabled to do this as the Ulanga valley was so flooded as to make the Iringa district comparatively safe.

In the south-western area Colonel Hawthorn's Column in April advanced from Songea, 40 miles east, to Likuju, where Lincke had about five companies. Lincke retired to the east without offering serious resistance. The Lupembe front remained quiet, the whole of the Ulanga valley (the Ruhudje, Kilombero and Ulanga Rivers) being now a vast lake, stretching on the north from the Iringa plateau to the foothills of the Mahenge Range.

Towards the end of April two enemy columns (chiefly composed of Kraut's former command)

crossed the river Rovuma, south of Tunduru, entered Portuguese East Africa, and proceeded to occupy the comparatively fertile regions between Mtarika and Lujenda River, and Lake Nyasa. Having constructed fortified camps in this area, they sent advanced parties to Mtonya and Lake Shirwa, and their patrols even crossed the Nyasaland border within 20 miles of Fort Mangoche, being, however, speedily driven back by our troops. Steps were taken to strengthen the garrison of South Nyasaland; and a Portuguese force left the coast for Mtengula on Lake Nyasa in the latter half of May.

There were reports of a contemplated German advance in force at Lake Shirwa, and even to Quelimane on the sea coast; but it would appear more probable that the enemy were either running through the country to see its supply possibilities, or even making preparations for the eventual retirement of their forces into Portuguese East Africa. They also exploited the country on the banks of the Lujenda River, where food was collected and stored, some being sent northward to Nassassi.

Operations against Wintgens.

Meanwhile, in the west Colonel Murray had been continuing the pursuit of Wintgens. On the 13th March Wintgens was at Alt-Utengule, on the 18th he had reached St. Moritz Mission. Colonel Murray, though continually attacking his rearguards, could not bring his main body to battle. Wintgens stripped the country of food as he advanced, leaving his pursuer dependent on his supply train. As it was uncertain whether this German force would continue its march northwards or turn west towards St. Bonifaz Mission, where its patrols had already been seen, I made arrangements to send a force to Tabora, whence it was to work southwards to the Kitunda Mission; while another detachment was transported by the assistance of the Belgian Commander via Lake Tanganyika to Bismarckburg.

On 21st March Colonel Tomlinson with an advanced detachment was within three miles of St. Moritz when he was heavily attacked and forced to retire after a sharp fight. Colonel Murray endeavoured to encircle Wintgens at St. Moritz; but the latter slipped away to the east, and, after crossing the Songwe River on the 1st April, marched by the northern shores of Lake Rukwa to Uleia, a rich district, whose inhabitants were friendly to the Germans. He then turned north-east, and by the middle of April was at Nkulu. Major Montgomery, King's African Rifles, commanding the detachment sent from Tabora, had reached Kitunda Mission on the 5th April, where he collected supplies and cattle. Wintgens moved towards Kitunda on the 26th, and Montgomery being in inferior force fell back towards Sikonge. A mobile column had meanwhile been formed on the central railway at Itigi; this force reached Kiromo on the 30th April. Murray, however, much delayed by his increasingly long line of supply, had only reached Nkulu by the end of the month.

The various columns operating in this area were now becoming less separated. This enabled me to place Brigadier-General Edwards in command with a view to ensuring their co-operation. I increased as far as possible the forces at his disposal; but his concentration was greatly delayed through the collapse of a rail-

way bridge between Mrogoro and Kilossa on 7th May.

Wintgens remained in the Kitunda neighbourhood until the middle of May. The greater part of his Askaris were Wanyamwezi, recruited from the Tabora and Muanza districts, and information showed that they refused to move south again and that there had been some desertions. In spite of this, their moral appeared to be unimpaired. Murray reached Kitunda on the 19th May, but Wintgens had moved north-west from that place on the 16th.

The Belgian Commander was now in close touch with General Edwards and co-operating with him. The latter disposed of his troops to the best advantage in order to attack Wintgens should he move north. Wintgens himself was so ill as to be forced to surrender to the Belgians; but his force, moving rapidly by night, eluded our columns and crossed the central railway between Tabora and Kilimatinde, being too hurried, however, to do any damage to the line. General Edwards' columns and the Belgians at once moved north in pursuit.

6. This completes the account of the actual operations during the rainy season, which were necessarily not extensive. It was a period of preparation for offensive movements to take place at the beginning of the dry season. Nevertheless a great strain was thrown upon the troops, as also on the various departments and services concerned, to meet and overcome the difficulties which arose in carrying on active operations during this period.

The endless work entailed in the upkeep of the various lines of communication and the improvement of landing facilities at Kilwa and Lindi made very heavy demands upon the limited body of technical troops at my disposal. It was found impossible to obtain adequate reinforcements to keep pace with the general wastage, and though the various units of the Royal Engineers, Technical troops and Road Corps were suffering severely from the general unhealthiness of the season, I was unable to withdraw them to give them the rest which they so much needed and which they had so well earned.

Supply and transport services were carried out in the face of the greatest difficulties owing to floods, wash-aways and almost impassable roads. Slaughter cattle for troops had to be brought from long distances, and the prevalence of East Coast fever, rinderpest and trypanosomiasis caused heavy mortality amongst the mobs of cattle marched across country from British East Africa. Sickness and wastage among the white personnel and among the porters naturally increased to a great extent, and very heavy demands, which could not be fully met, were made on reinforcements. Great energy and devotion was displayed throughout by these services.

It will be realised that exceptionally heavy work was thrown upon the Veterinary Corps. How great was the animal wastage has been shown in the monthly returns. For the whole period under review the mortality amongst horses, mules and donkeys in the field was extremely heavy, mainly caused by trypanosomiasis, and to a lesser extent by horse-sickness. Contributory causes were lack of food and the heavy rains. The difficulties of transport made it impossible to carry grain for the number of animals on the various lines.

Medical Services had an exceedingly difficult problem to contend with in evacuating the sick and wounded during the rains. It had to be done mainly by carriers, often through swamps and roads which were for miles under three or four feet of water. Their personnel suffered considerably from the prevailing diseases, but worked with great devotion under the most trying circumstances.

In his last despatch General Smuts, my predecessor in command, expressed his appreciation of the assistance rendered by the Governments of India, South Africa, British East Africa, Uganda and Zanzibar respectively, and by many charitable societies and private individuals. The same ready help has been afforded by all of these during the period in which I have been in command. I especially wish to thank the Commander-in-Chief in India for his readiness to meet the many demands made upon him.

The East African forces fully appreciate all they owe to the Mercantile Marine, and realise that it is to the devotion and untiring efforts of this service that they are able to maintain themselves in the field.

My warmest thanks are due to the Royal Navy for their valuable co-operation. They have invariably shown themselves eager to assist the land forces in every way possible.

In this short despatch I have refrained from giving more than a general description of the conditions under which the campaign has been conducted during the rains. But I trust that it may be sufficient to give some idea of the hardships which have been experienced by the troops during this period. Apart from the very trying climatic conditions, the scarcity of suitable transport caused great privations, to alleviate which the efforts made by the various Staffs, Departments and Services were exceedingly strenuous. All ranks have endured this trying time in the most praiseworthy manner. The spirit and keenness of the fighting troops has been undiminished. Upon the Commanders, Staffs and Departments there has fallen the double burden of contending with the difficulties of carrying on the campaign during the rainy season, while at the same time reorganising the force and preparing for the subsequent advance.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. R. Hoskins,

Lieutenant-General,

Commanding the Forces in East Africa.

To the Secretary of State for War

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